



Helena Independent Record Feb. 1, 2002

Helicopter crash



Jon Ebert IR staff photographer

Helicopter rescue personnel attend to a victim of Thursday morning's

Crash injures 2

...t from an indi-
...helicopter that
...own very fast,"
...as stated that she
...bris flying."
...tions of the heli-
...lay strewn for a
...ed feet in sever-
...ctions. The
...g for the tail-
...sheered off and
...om was scat-
...The overhead
...were twisted
...e front wind-
...broken.
...re than 20 orange
...ces of the vehi-

"It looks to me that they're lucky to be alive," said Ed Chevallier, chief of the Canyon Creek Volunteer Fire Department, one of the responding units.

More than 15 emergency vehicles from the Montana Highway Patrol, the Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Department, St. Peter's Hospital and the Canyon Creek and Birdseye volunteer fire departments dotted the empty field.

Liedle said that when emergency crews arrived, both occupants of the helicopter had extracted themselves from the wreck. The more seriously injured of the two was found lying in the snow next to the aircraft.

Baucus: EPA set to act on Libby

■ Public health
emergency declaration
would clear way for
insulation removal

By KATHLEEN McLAUGHLIN
IR State Bureau

HELENA — After talking with the head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Thursday, Sen. Max Baucus said he believes the Bush administration will declare a public health emergency in Libby, paving the way for removal of potentially dangerous insulation from area buildings.

Baucus, a Democrat, was shut out of a meeting about Libby asbestos issues on Thursday between

top officials from W.R. Grace and Co. and the EPA. Grace is the company that for nearly 30 years owned and operated Libby's



Baucus

'Grace is going to have to perform a miracle to overturn the direction which the EPA seems to be going.'

SEN. MAX BAUCUS, D-MONT.

if it in the weeds
e body of the
side, leaking

Both men were transported to St.
Peter's Hospital in separate ambu-

More **CHOPPER**, page 12A

ace to Sky field

k near downtown Helena.
h Helena devoid of snow,
teams will likely pull
shers perched atop Air-
train Vehicles for the cer-
emonial start.



enson
he
rod champ

d love to have a big
wd. The mushers are real-
proud of their dogs."
throughout the year,
shers train and tend to
r dogs, preparing them
a single goal — to com-
e in the 350-mile race.
y teams train at night

when it's cooler.

It becomes taxing after a
while, Beckstrom said, with
many mushers putting 1,500
training miles on their dogs
before they even get to race.

"Most will be running
Alaskan huskies and a few
Siberian huskies," Beck-
strom said. "The huskies
have a lot of heart. They're
smart, they've got tough feet,
they're muscular and they're
always willing to please."

The actual race begins
Sunday, Feb. 10, on the
grounds once reserved for
the Seven-Up Ranch Supper
Club, which burned to the
ground in an October blaze.
Tents will be erected and the
race will start from its tradi-
tional location.

After the start, teams will
move north to the White Tail
Ranch, likely reaching the
first checkpoint late Sunday

More **RACE**, page 12A

now-
defunct vermiculite mine and
produced Zonolite insulation,
the product in question. Zono-
lite production at Libby
released harmful tremolite
asbestos into the environ-
ment, sickening and killing
scores of area residents over
the years.

Though Baucus, who was in
Kalispell and Libby on Thurs-
day, was refused telephone
access to the Grace-EPA
meeting, he did speak with
EPA Administrator Christie
Whitman about the situation.
Baucus said he supports the
regional EPA effort to declare
a public-health emergency in
Libby and thinks the Bush
administration will concur.

"Frankly, in listening to
her, I had the very strong
impression that she's going to
decide to make the declara-
tion," Baucus said after talk-
ing with Whitman. "I don't
want to breach any confi-
dences, but that was the
impression I had."

Whitman, the former
Republican governor of New
Jersey, told Baucus she was
unaware of Thursday's meet-
ing until his request to be part
of the proceedings. EPA offi-
cials also denied a reporter's
request last week to listen to
the meeting. Besides top

More **EPA**, page 12A

EPA: Grace speakers dominate meeting

continued from 1A

agency and company officials, the meeting included regional EPA officers from Denver (who have proposed the emergency declaration) listening via telephone and a representative from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Baucus said even though he was denied access to the meeting, he doesn't believe the company will succeed in swaying the EPA.

"Grace is going to have to perform a miracle to overturn the direction which the EPA seems to be going," said Baucus.

"It was only a listening session, not a negotiation," Baucus said of the meeting.

In an interview last week, a top W.R. Grace and Co. official said his company wanted to meet with the EPA to get a better idea of the science the agency was using to propose the emergency declaration. An agenda for the meeting, however, showed that the EPA was set to do most of the listening yesterday — to

lawyers and scientists for Grace.

The agenda named four attorneys, three scientists and one company vice-president who would be present at the meeting on behalf of W.R. Grace and Co. Their various presentations were to include an "assessment of the risk presented by vermiculite attic insulation" and "testing methods and analytical data relating to attic insulation." The final item set for discussion was "Grace's proposal to develop data."

Bill Corcoran, Grace vice-president for public and regulatory affairs, said last week that company officials wanted to hear from the EPA about the science behind the agency's proposal.

"We need to hear their side of the story," said Corcoran, who could not be reached for comment on Thursday. "I don't think anybody's heard it yet."

But the outline for Thursday's meeting listed only speakers on behalf of W.R. Grace and Co.

Forest Ser

Judge has blocked Bitterroot salvage logging projects

MISSOULA (AP) — The U.S. Service filed an emergency appeal with the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Thursday seeking almost immediate permission to proceed with five logging projects in the Bitterroot National Forest.

The federal government said an emergency requiring action within 21 days exists.

The appeal seeks approval to logging on 5,400 acres of the 30,000-acre Bitterroot forest that burned during the 2000 wildfire.

More than 15 million board feet of timber must be cut this winter.

Arsenic: We

continued from 1A

"We need to characterize this, learn the extent of it, and find out how it is moving and why it is moving."

Jon Nickel, Asarco's environmental manager, said he's looking forward to hearing what the East Helena residents have to say about the discovery.

"This was a surprise to us because of all the monitoring we've done in the past," he said. "I'm anxious to hear what the residents have to

Chopper: Last aircraft crash was last May